

CMI Future Leaders Academy

CMI Aspiring Leaders Programme

Bridging the Gap: From Early-Career Uncertainty to Professional Excellence

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Programme Overview

The CMI Aspiring Leaders programme is a high-impact, employer-funded development journey designed for young people (e.g. aged 18-24) who are early-career professionals and junior employees. It addresses the "winging it" phase often experienced by young people in their first roles by bridging the gap between being simply 'good at the job' and being a confident, proactive professional. Rather than focusing on traditional management theory, which can feel remote to this demographic, the programme focuses on Everyday Leadership and Professional Identity. It equips learners with the 'human skills' and self-belief required to navigate workplace cultures, take initiative, and deliver immediate value.

Aligned to CMI's Professional Standard as well as to Level 2 on the regulated qualification framework (RQF), The CMI Aspiring Leaders programme helps organisations reduce early-career turnover, improve productivity, and build a pipeline of proactive, resilient and future-ready talent who can demonstrate real-world impact in the workplace. It culminates in the achievement of Foundation Chartered Manager (fCMgr) status, which is embedded into the programme delivery, providing a clear professional identity and pride and a route to full Chartered status.

CMI research shows that successfully integrating young people into the workplace, and keeping them there, is about ensuring they have the practical everyday leadership skills, but also ensuring that they are then managed effectively. That's why CMI has also developed the [CMI First Line Managers Programme](#). This is the ideal programme for managers and leaders of young people entering the workforce, supporting them to navigate the challenges of managing early-career professionals effectively.

Programme Structure

The programme consists of three core aspects, provided as a guide for delivery. This includes:

- **Masterclasses** - covering key topics such as professional identity, digital fluency, and team collaboration, which can be applied flexibly to suit learner and employer needs. They provide an overview of capabilities learners will be able to achieve on completion of the Masterclass, alongside optional suggested content which may support delivery and learning.
- **Workplace Improvement Task** - facilitating learners to undertake a real-world project to deliver tangible impact and ROI for their organisation, whilst demonstrating the ability to apply learning in the workplace
- **Foundation Chartered Manager** - a self-reflective process whereby learners demonstrate their professional competence, and commitment to being conscious, inclusive leaders

Registration Codes

The title given below is the title as it will appear on the qualification when awarded to the learner.
Completion of the programme will result in the award of Foundation Chartered Manager status.

This qualification is available for registration from June 2026



CMI Code	Title	Embedded Chartered Grade
ALP	CMI Aspiring Leaders Programme	Foundation Chartered Manager

Masterclass Outlines and Suggested Content

The Masterclass content consists of outcomes (what learners will be able to do on completion) and suggested content, which may help underpin delivery and learning. The suggested content provides a guide; however, **examples listed are not mandatory or exhaustive**: Partners and learners are free to **select examples most relevant to their role or organisation**.

To support this specification, there are template documents such as Worksheets, Checklists and Scripts to support partners and learners in the completion of this programme. These are provided as a guiding resource and are not mandatory: they can also be contextualised to suit delivery goals, if preferred. The documents can be located [HERE](#).

Learning Journeys

As part of our membership benefits, all learners will have up to 12 months' access to CMI Thrive. As part of their enrollment in this programme, learners will be able to access learning journeys, curated specifically to complement completion of the Masterclasses. Partners are also able to access these learning journeys to support programme delivery. Learners will also have access to CMI's new mentoring network.

These Learning Journeys will be available from July 2026.

Diagnostic Tool

To support learners in measuring their learning progress, a bespoke Diagnostic Tool aligned to the content of this programme has been developed. It is recommended that learners undertake this self-assessment diagnostic at the beginning, middle and end of their programme to validate knowledge and skill development.

This diagnostic tool will be available from July 2026.

Alignment to the CMI Professional Standard

The table below signposts how this programme aligns to the CMI Professional Standard at the 'Self-Manager' and 'Team Member' levels.

Masterclass	Masterclass Overview	Alignment to the CMI Professional Standard
Professional Identity & Self-Leadership	<p>Transition from education to professional life. Focus on personal branding, growth mindset, and resilience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "Mindset Shift" required to move from education to work. • Building a personal brand and learning to lead yourself. • Digital Professionalism as a core part of a modern professional identity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Effectiveness: Managing yourself; Communicating and influencing
Communication, Networking & Team Dynamics	<p>Mastering professional relationships, active listening, and resolving straightforward workplace conflicts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building professional relationships and active listening. • Team Dynamics, diversity of thought and resolving disagreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal Excellence: Building relationships and networks; Using emotional intelligence.
The Workplace Improvement Task	<p>Deliver real impact by identifying, planning, and implementing a small-scale improvement project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covering decision-making, agility, and time management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational Performance: Achieving results; Driving delivery; Identifying and implementing change.

Approval and Quality Assurance

Approval Process

The addition of the qualification to a Centre's approved remit requires the submission of an additional product approval request via CMI Partner Connect. Centres must complete the relevant application form within the platform, ensuring that all requested information and supporting evidence are provided in full. Details of how to submit an application are available [here](#).

Assessment and Quality Assurance

This programme is intended to be flexible and agile to suit the needs of learners and employers: this means that partners can adapt their content and assessment as necessary. CMI does not mandate formal assessments as part of the CMI Aspiring Leaders Programme, but requires partners to verify learner eligibility for Foundation Chartered Manager (fCMgr). CMI reserves the right to sample evidence of programme completion and fCMgr eligibility as required. The programme is quality assured by CMI and is not on the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF).

Progression Opportunities

Foundation Chartered Manager

Learners completing this programme will automatically be awarded Foundation Chartered Manager status (fCMgr) on completion of their learning.

To qualify for fCMGr status, Learners must complete this qualification and demonstrate competence by the end of the course. Partners are required to verify:

- Reflective Practice: Have learners completed a CPD Log with reflections?
- Application of Learning: Have learners applied learning and demonstrated competence through a professional discussion?

For more information on fCMgr and its benefits, please click [here](#).

Masterclass 1: Professional Identity and Self-Leadership

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Develop a **professional identity** and **personal brand**

Professional identity: (how you are in the context of work)

- Everyday Leadership: Focuses on self-regulation and "leading yourself" before leading others and demonstrating personal accountability and ownership
- Professional Norms: Understanding the unspoken rules, ethics, and behaviours expected within your specific industry.
- Overcoming Imposter Syndrome: Building the internal self-confidence and "psychological ownership" of your role.
- Business Awareness: Understanding the complexities of your business and how your specific role contributes to solving customer needs.

Personal brand: (how others see you)

- Stakeholder Perception: Actively analysing and influencing how different groups (bosses, clients, peers) perceive your work.
- Leadership Qualities: Demonstrating visible leadership traits that make you stand out as a person of influence.
- Stakeholder Expectations: Identifying what others need from you and consistently delivering on that promise to build trust.
- Differentiation: Highlighting the specific strengths that make your "brand" unique compared to others in the same profession

2. Apply a **growth mindset** to workplace **challenges**

Growth mindset:

- Building resilience: viewing a setback not as a personal failure but as a temporary hurdle
- Turning setbacks into learning opportunities: assessing what went wrong to improve future performance (the "reframing" technique)
- Bouncing back: turning workplace anxiety into excitement, learning why making mistakes is the fastest way to grow, being able to constructively accept and take on board feedback or criticism, recognising when and how to ask for help or support when feeling overwhelmed
- Goal setting: setting your own targets and adopting continuous professional development.

Challenges

- Navigating professional environments: dealing with the high stakes, complex hierarchies and shifting expectations of the modern workplace. Develops strategies for "working in the grey" and managing ambiguity.
- Navigating the transition from education to the modern workplace.
- Workplace anxiety: feeling overwhelmed by new responsibilities or fear of making a mistake
- Experiencing setbacks: encountering project failures, missed deadlines, or critical feedback for the first time

3. Utilise **digital fluency** for productivity

Digital fluency:

- Modern digital tools and AI: how to apply digital skills to work smarter and maximise efficiency in the

<ul style="list-style-type: none">workplace.• Information management: developing broad digital skills for organising, storing, and retrieving data efficiently to support team operations and informed decision-making.• Cyber security awareness: following legislation and organisational policies to protect against security threats.
Mapping to CMI Professional Standard
Personal Effectiveness: Managing yourself; Communicating and influencing.

Useful Resources

The following resources are optional but are provided as they may support this Masterclass:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tbc

Masterclass 2: Communication, Networking and Team Dynamics

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Communicate with impact across different audiences.
Impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building professional relationships: talking to senior colleagues and knowing how to be heard.• Active listening and networking: using listening to engage others and mastering workplace communication.• Mastering 'small talk' and building relationships to support career progression.• Digital professionalism: maintaining professional standards across email, social media and digital platforms, knowing when to step away from messaging platforms to have a direct verbal conversation• Mastering written, verbal, and digital professionalism.
2. Apply approaches to collaborate effectively within a team
Approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding team dynamics: valuing diversity of thought and supporting colleagues to work towards shared goals, creating a supportive environment where asking colleagues for help is encouraged.• Operate openly and transparently”: document all workflows and “good practices” in shared folders/drives to ensure information is accessible• Managing workplace disagreements: identifying practical and professional ways to resolve straightforward conflicts (for example: face-to-face vs virtual), being open to other people’s views when resolving.• Practical problem-solving: proposing innovative solutions to workplace issues rather than simply reporting them.
Mapping to CMI Professional Standard
Interpersonal Excellence: Building relationships and networks; Coaching and mentoring. Personal Effectiveness: Communicating and influencing.

Useful Resources

The following resources are optional but are provided as they may support this Masterclass:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tbc

Masterclass 3: The Workplace Improvement Task

By completing this Masterclass, learners will be able to:

1. Manage own workload and resources with agility .
Agility: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Prioritising effectively between urgent and important tasks.● Planning workflows and exercising informed judgement with autonomy.● Making decisions: Taking personal accountability and ownership when leading projects and making independent calls● Being agile: Working in the grey, staying productive and pivoting quickly when priorities shift or plans change.● Time management skills: prioritising effectively and differentiating between urgent and important tasks.
2. Deliver a tangible improvement in the workplace
Improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identifying a problem or inefficiency and proposing an innovative solution.● Taking the lead on a project and making independent calls to move work forward.
3. Reflect on the impact of the task
Impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● On self: Evidencing the application of 'everyday leadership' and professional growth.● Organisational or operational efficiency: making things run smoother, faster, cheaper or with fewer issues● Cultural or human impact: "soft" impact, such as employee morale, safety and wellbeing or knowledge sharing● Brand impact: How the improvement changes the way the world sees the organisation.
Mapping to CMI Professional Standard
Organisational Performance: Achieving results; Driving delivery. Personal Effectiveness: Making decisions; Managing yourself.

Useful Resources

The following resources are optional but are provided as they may support this Masterclass:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● tbc

Annex 1 - Revisions To Document

The below table summarises any revisions made to this document since publication.

Revisions Summary	Rationale for Revision	Document Version	Revision Date
First Draft	Initial Consultation Draft	Version 1	May 2026